NOVA SCOTIA

Seniors

French-language Services Plan 2008-2009

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Message from Deputy Minister

It is with pleasure that I present the Department of Seniors' *2008-2009 French-language Services Plan*. This is the department's second French-language Services Plan and we look forward to building upon past work to increase services in French for our Acadian and francophone seniors.

In September of 2007 Premier Rodney MacDonald announced the creation of the new Department of Seniors. The Seniors' Secretariat Committee of Cabinet Ministers remains an important part of the new department, and it continues to ensure inter-departmental coordination of policies, programs and services affecting seniors. However, with the new department there is now a stronger voice at the Cabinet table and a deputy minister to ensure the voice of seniors is a vital contributor to corporate planning and priorities.

While the department has already implemented a number of French language activities, it will be identifying and employing more strategies to serve our province's Acadian and francophone population more extensively. This year's priorities include: furthering the development of linkages and partnerships within government that address the French-language services needs of Acadian and francophone seniors; working with the Regroupement des Aînées et Aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse (RANE) and Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse to consult and identify the needs for French-language services; providing information about funding opportunities and our senior abuse work in both languages; and continuing to support French-language training opportunities for staff.

We are pleased to have made progress on services in French, however, much remains to be done. To continue to make gains we will develop various types of partnerships and alliances, particularly with the Acadian and francophone organizations. As the department works this year on its plan and activities, the following five fundamental pillars will guide its progress: sustainability, flexibility, "phased in" approach, build on successes, and input from the Acadian and francophone community. In order to achieve further progress in the implementation of the plan, we will endeavor to find original and innovative solutions.

We look forward to continued partnerships with Acadian and francophone seniors as we develop our French-language services in 2008-2009.

Sincerely,

Rosalind Penfound
Deputy Minister, Department of Seniors

Mission, Vision, Mandate of the Department of Seniors

On September 10, 2007, Premier Rodney MacDonald announced the new Department of Seniors with the Honourable Carolyn Bolivar-Getson as Minister. The Seniors' Secretariat Committee of Cabinet Ministers remains an important part of the Department, and it continues to ensure cross-departmental coordination of policies, programs and services affecting seniors.

Mission
The Department of Seniors is committed to ensuring the inclusion, well-being, and independence of seniors in Nova Scotia by facilitating the development of policies on aging and programs for seniors across government and through the provision and coordination of strategic planning, support, services, programs and information. This is achieved through leadership and collaboration with partners.

Vision
Nova Scotia is an inclusive society of caring communities that supports the well-being of seniors and values their contributions (Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia, 2005).

Mandate

- To lead the implementation of the *Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia.*
- To facilitate the planning, development, and coordination of policies, programs, and services for seniors in partnership with government departments, seniors, and voluntary seniors' groups.
- To consult with seniors and ensure their views are considered by the province in the development of policies, programs, and services.
- To serve as a single entry point to the Government of Nova Scotia – providing information on programs and services for seniors and their families and responding to seniors' issues and concerns.

Responding to verbal and written requests from the public to communicate in French

In 2007-2008, a written memo was prepared for staff outlining the importance of providing service in French and the procedure for doing so. The memo stated that all written requests received from the public that are communicated in French will be replied to in French in a timely manner and will follow the procedure outlined in the policy memo.

For verbal requests, the memo indicates that verbal requests to communicate in French will be accommodated to the extent possible at this time. The procedure for doing so is outlined and includes direction to staff who are not fluent in French

to utilize the *Bonjour Guide* to provide a courtesy response in French and direct the call to a staff member, if available, who is sufficiently fluent in French. If this person is not available, staff will request the caller's name and telephone number and ensure a government representative who is able to communicate in French contacts them as soon as possible.

The Department recognizes the importance of being able to respond to written and verbal requests from the public to communicate in French and would like to be better positioned to do so. Therefore, the Department intends to identify bilingualism as an asset in select future job postings.

French-language services/activities currently offered

The Department has continued to undertake a number of French-language activities related to its work on the Senior Abuse Prevention Strategy. With the assistance of the Nova Scotia Office of Acadian Affairs, the Department continues to translate several key elder abuse resource documents into French.

In partnership with the Regroupement des Aînées et Aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse (RANE) and with translation support from Acadian Affairs, the Department is pleased to continue to offer its Senior Abuse Prevention e-Bulletin in French and English. RANE contributes to the content and works with the Department in responding to inquiries and submissions regarding the e-Bulletin that are submitted in French. RANE is also included as a member of the Group of IX Seniors' Organizations which acts as an advisory committee of the Department. RANE's participation on the Group of IX is an important mechanism to the Department in ensuring the voices of Acadian and francophone seniors are heard.

Additionally, over the last year, radio announcements regarding the Senior Abuse Prevention Strategy were provided in French and English. A French language television advertisement was also attained and is now posted on the Department's website.

Also in the past year, the Department has released a province-wide *Call for Proposals* (including application packages) for grant funding opportunities related to the Positive Aging Fund and Age-Friendly Communities Program in both English and French. It will continue to do so for subsequent calls in 2008-2009.

The Department has also recently translated its *Health Literacy for Older Adults Manual* into French to support a literacy program in Chezzetcook funded by the Department of Seniors and the Department of Education.

How the Department's plan will contribute to the preservation or growth of the Acadian and francophone community

Our plan includes measures related to communicating in French, consulting the Acadian and francophone community, and increasing and promoting services available in French.

Our department provides services to seniors, their families and the organizations that serve them. By working towards ensuring that services are available in French, we enabling Acadians and francophones to speak in their language in times when they are most vulnerable. We are thereby contributing to the preservation of the community.

Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2007-2008 and Goals, Objectives and Measures for 2008-2009

The Department developed its first French-language Services Plan in 2007-2008. During that year, the Department reviewed previous consultation work in an effort to identify needs of the Acadian and francophone seniors, ensured a staff member was representing the Department on the French-language Coordinators Committee led by the Office of Acadian Affairs, and engaged in preliminiary discussions with Regroupement des Aînées et Aînés de la Nouvelle-Écosse (RANE) and Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse regarding French-language services needs.

Hearing from Acadian and francophone seniors, first hand, is important to the Department as it continues in its early stages of French-language services planning. It was intended that the Department would consult with Acadian and francophone seniors through the 2007-2008 year, however, that has been moved ahead to 2008-2009. RANE and Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse have agreed to assist the Department in its efforts to reach its members.

The intent is to put in place specific and informed goals, objectives and measures in the 2009-2010 plan based upon activities in 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.

As the Department works each year on its plan and activities, the following five fundamental pillars will guide its progress: sustainability, flexibility, "phased in" approach, builds on successes and input from the Acadian and francophone community.

Corporate Objective 1: Strengthening the policy, regulatory, and administrative framework in support of the French-language Services Act.

Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2007-2008

- Supported the work of the Office of Acadian Affairs and the implementation of the French-language Services Act by ensuring representation of the Department on the French-language Services Coordinating Committee.
- Developed a policy memo for staff detailing the importance of providing service in French and the procedure for doing so.

Specific goals and objectives for 2008-2009

- Develop linkages and partnerships within government that address the French-language services needs of Acadian and francophone seniors.

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2008-2009

- Meet with the French-language Coordinators in departments to which the Department most often refers requests and issues from seniors in order to ascertain and prioritize needs for French-language services. A primary contact for 2008-2009 will be the Department of Health.
- Continue to ensure representation of the Department on the French-language Services Coordinating Committee.

Corporate Objective 2: Consulting with the Acadian and francophone community.

Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2007-2008

- Specific work on this objective was moved ahead to 2008-2009. However, as a member of the Group of IX Seniors' Organizations, RANE acts as an advisory committee of the Department on an on-going basis.
- Held preliminary discussions with RANE and Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse to discuss consulting with Acadian seniors.

Specific goals and objectives for 2008-2009

- Meet with Acadian and francophone seniors to identify their needs for services to be provided in French.

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2008-2009

- The Department will work with RANE and Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse to consult with seniors across the province in order to begin to identify needs for French-language services. In order to facilitate this discussion, the Department has asked the organizations to include the Department on their agendas for upcoming meetings. The first meeting will be May 15th during the Annual General Meeting of Réseau Santé Nouvelle-Écosse.
- The Department will continue to consult with RANE on the Senior Abuse Prevention Strategy.

- Continue to consult and work with RANE as a member of the Group of IX Seniors' Organizations which acts as an advisory committee of the Department.

Corporate Objective 3: Communicating, sharing information, and promoting services available in French.

Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2007-2008

- The Department published its first French-language Services Plan for 2007-2008 in both languages and made it available on the Department's website.
- In partnership with RANE, and with translation support from Acadian Affairs, the Department offered Senior Abuse Prevention e-Bulletin in French and English.
- Radio announcements regarding the Senior Abuse Prevention Strategy were provided in French and English.
- A French language television advertisement was attained and is now posted on the Department's website.
- The Department has released a province-wide *Call for Proposals* (including application packages) for grant funding opportunities related to the Positive Aging Fund and Age-Friendly Communities Program in both English and French.
- The Department translated its *Health Literacy for Older Adults Manual* into French to support a literacy program in Chezzetcook funded by the Department of Seniors and the Department of Education.

Specific goals and objectives for 2008-2009

- In partnership with RANE and with translation support from Acadian Affairs, continue to provide the Department's upcoming Elder Abuse Prevention e-Bulletin in French.

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2008-2009

- With RANE, promote the e-Bulletin within Acadian and francophone communities.
- Continue to release *Calls for Proposals* in both languages.

Corporate Objective 4: Supporting French-language services development, planning and delivery in priority areas.

Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2007-2008

- Supported three staff members to participate in French-language training.

Specific goals and objectives for 2008-2009

- Increase staff ability to communicate in French.

Specific measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2008-2009

- Support staff through release time to participate in the French-language training opportunities available through the Office of Acadian Affairs.
- Work with Human Resources to have French-language requirements included in the appropriate job postings.